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REVIEWS.

Les Lois Sociales. Esquisse d'une sociologie. Par G. TARDE.
Paris : Félix Alcan, 1898. Pp. 172.

M. TARDE has presented in this little volume the substance of a course of lectures delivered at the Collège Libre des Sciences Sociales, October, 1897. The book is an epitome of the three principal books on sociology previously published by the same author, viz.: *Les Lois de l'imitation*, *L'Opposition universelle*, and *La Logique sociale*. It is also an attempt to show the relation which, in the author's own view, exists between the three books.

Whatever may be M. Tarde's permanent place in sociological theory, he is certainly a very prominent, perhaps the most prominent, figure just at present among the founders of the new science. All sociologists will accordingly welcome this brief résumé of his views.

The fundamental methodological conception of Tarde's system is that science is consideration of reality under three aspects, *i. e.*, the *repetitions*, the *oppositions*, and the *adaptations* with which the given portion of reality is concerned. Scientific discovery involves detection of these *repetitions*, *oppositions*, and *adaptations* in spite of the variations, "dissymmetries," and "disharmonies" by which they are concealed (p. 10). Tracing out cause and effect is not the whole of science. If it were, pragmatic history would be the most perfect specimen of science. In addition to *causes*, we need to know the *laws* of phenomena. Hence science has to use the three keys named, to discover the laws of repetition, of opposition, of adaptation (p. 11).

These considerations indicate what sociology must do in order to deserve the name "science" (p. 13). Hence M. Tarde entitles the three chapters which make up the body of the book: chap. 1, "The Repetition of Phenomena;" chap. 2, "The Opposition of Phenomena;" chap. 3, "The Adaptation of Phenomena." Starting with astronomy as an illustration, the author reaffirms (p. 18) that science always deals with similarities and repetitions, and that its progress is always an advance from obvious and extensive manifestations of these aspects to their hidden and microscopic forms. Passing from illustrations to

the science of society, Tarde declares (p. 24) that, if we consider a town, a crowd, an army, instead of the objects studied by astronomy or biology, the same scientific relations will appear, *i. e.*, our knowledge passes from premature generalities, founded on vain and illusory analogies, to generalizations based on a mass of minute facts relatively precise and similar.

Sociology has been struggling long toward possession of such material in its own sphere. Tarde asserts that the vain efforts of Plato, Aristotle, Vico, Montesquieu, Chateaubriand, Hegel, and the recent evolutionists failed because they could not get their vision trained on sufficiently minute facts. A change promising better results came in with the attempts of the philologists, the philosophers of religion, and especially the economists, to perform the more modest task of identifying minute facts and of formulating their laws. In perfect accord with the view which this JOURNAL has editorially maintained, Tarde speaks of "these specialists in sociology" (p. 26). It is these searchers among the constituent facts of human activity who get out the raw material of sociology. No sociological generalizations can be worth considering, unless they are generalizations of the data furnished by these "specialists in sociology." Tarde next attends to the claim that the explanation of all the facts brought to notice by the "specialists in sociology" must be *applied psychology*. Referring to the argument to this effect at the close of Mill's *Logic*, he points out that the psychology to which Mill looked for the key to social phenomena was merely individual psychology; "a sort of English associationalism, magnified and exteriorized." On the contrary, says Tarde, our explanations of social facts will come, not from *intra*-cerebral, but from *inter*-cerebral psychology (p. 28). "The contact of one mind with another is an event entirely distinct in the life of each. It is sharply separated from the totality of their contacts with the rest of the universe, and it produces the most unforeseen states of consciousness, states inexplicable by physiological psychology."

Tarde finds in the facts of association this initial problem: "Many minds, impelled each by its own desires, fix upon the same objects, affirm the same idea, try to bring to pass the same thing. In other words, they act as though they were moved by a common impulse. They become practically a unified force producing types and qualities of associated activity. How is this convergence to be explained?" In a word, says Tarde (p. 35), not by heredity, nor by identity of geographical environment, but by "*suggestion-imitation*." "Organic

needs, spiritual tendencies, exist in us at first only as realizable virtualities under the most diverse forms, in spite of their vague primordial similarity. Among these possible realizations it is the imitated indication of a first initiator which determines the choice of one rather than another." Accordingly Tarde holds (p. 41) that this fact of imitation is the pass-key to the social mystery. It will furnish the formulas which will reduce the apparent chaos of history and of human life to orderly expression.

Tarde's weakness is just at this point. The play of imitation in human affairs is beyond question. But that imitation tells the whole story is preposterous. Tarde's theory claims to account for the incessant appearance of variation in men's ideas, feelings, and actions; but the claim is unfounded. He assumes "élite initiators" at the beginning of the social process, but he asserts that after this initial moment all the members of society are mere imitators. I suppose he would say that the first soldiers who used powder and shot, instead of pikes and arrows, simply imitated former soldiers in using *weapons*; the increased effectiveness of the weapons does not count. The inventors of armor-clad vessels imitated all the sea fighters in *protecting themselves* against other sea fighters. The means employed are merely imitative combinations of previous elements, etc., etc.¹ No one will be satisfied a great while with this stretching of the truth.

The effect of M. Tarde's second chapter, "Opposition of Phenomena," upon my mind, is to impeach, rather than to confirm, his main thesis. Tarde divides oppositions in human societies into the three chief forms of war, competition, and disputation. His contention is, first, that each of two opposing social factors is itself the terminus of a "radius of imitation;" second, that the opposition between these factors is merely a mediary affair, destined to disappear in the eventual adaptation (p. 104). The former of these propositions is the original thesis to be proved, and the chapter on "opposition" certainly makes the thesis no more probable. As I understand Tarde's claim,

¹ This seems to be the import of a passage on p. 134, the implications of which are utterly arbitrary, viz.: "We must avoid confounding, as is so often done, the *progress of instruction*, a simple fact of imitation, with the *progress of science*, a fact of adaptation; or the progress of industrialism with the progress of industry itself; or the progress of morality with the progress of moral theory; or the progress of militarism with progress of the military art; or the progress of language—*i. e.*, its territorial spread—with the progress of language in the sense of refinement of its grammar and the enrichment of its dictionary." This passage will be referred to below.

it would be expressed in the concrete: "Charles the First was the latest term of one series of imitations; Cromwell the latest term of another series; the Restoration, or the Act of Settlement, the accommodation or 'adaptation' of the two." Or "Bourbonism was the end term of one series of imitations; Jacobinism of another; Bonapartism their 'adaptation.'" Of the claim thus expressed, we may say, without much risk: first, if any historian believes that either the Stuarts, or the Puritans, or the Bourbons, or the Jacobins can be disposed of in terms of "imitation," he would confer a favor upon the sociologists by making himself known; second, even assuming that the primary thesis were established, the formulation thus far does more to raise the hypothesis of an undetected factor in the process of "adaptation" than to satisfy the mind with the simple factor "imitation." In other words, to recur to the last illustration, Tarde's own argument has the effect of provoking the presumption that a something, which we may call Napoleonism, was a real coördinating factor in the reaction between Bourbonism and Jacobinism. Tarde's own argument seems, therefore, to make rather toward a conclusion more like Baldwin's, viz., a "dialectic of social growth" (*Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 543). He has not yet made it credible either that "imitation" is the sum and substance of both thesis and antithesis, or that "imitation" is the combining agency by force of which the synthesis, or equilibrated social status, results.

In chap. 3, "The Adaptation of Phenomena," the author describes *adaptation* as a condition of the elements composing an aggregate. It is of two degrees: first, that presented by the relations of the component elements of an aggregate to each other; second, that which unites these elements to the systems in which they are contained, or, in a word, to the environment (p. 117). "Adjustment within itself differs very greatly in every order of facts, from adjustment to external conditions; just as repetition of self (habit) differs from repetition of others (heredity or imitation), as opposition within the self (hesitation, doubt) differs from opposition to others (conflict, competition.)" All science is progressive endeavor to think the adjustment actually given in the portion of reality contemplated (p. 118). This is true of sociology, from its first forms in theology (p. 123), through its forms as philosophy of history, down to the evolutionary sociologists (p. 124). At this point Tarde brings the following indictment against the evolutionists: "The same error always reappears in their method, viz., they believe that in order to discover

regularity, order, logical progress, in the facts of society, the details must be left behind, because they are essentially irregular. A very high point of outlook must be taken so as to bring vast wholes within a panoramic view. It is assumed at the same time that the principle and source of all social coördination resides in some very general fact, whence it percolates by degrees and in progressive dilutions down into particular facts. In a word, man is carried along by a law of evolution within the action of which his initiative is only apparent" (p. 125). Tarde declares, on the contrary, that close adaptations are to be found only in the details of human facts; that the farther we go from the small and closely knit social group—from the family, school, workshop, congregation, convent, regiment—to city, province, nation, the less perfect and striking is the solidarity. At this point, again (p. 127), it seems to me that in recording a correct observation—viz., "civilization is characterized by the facilities which it offers for the realization of an individual programme of social reorganization"—Tarde points toward the very facts which will presently compel radical restatement of his hypothesis. This is still more evident a little later, when he says (p. 129): "We must look for elementary social adaptation in the brain itself, in the individual genius of the inventor. Invention—I mean that which is destined to be imitated, for that which remains shut up in the mind of its author does not count socially—invention is a harmony of ideas which is the mother of all the harmonies of men." In all this Tarde is dealing with factors in the situation with which his own thesis in its present form is irreconcilable. He is refuting himself. Tarde has done most notable service in calling attention to the function of imitation. His service ends when he attempts to make us believe that imitation is the social *factotum*. We may admit that "at each cerebral alliance of two inventions in a third, imitation is involved" (p. 133), but it is equally clear—or more so—that, as Tarde declares on the following page, "these two progressions—the imitative and the inventive—are continually interlaced." The logical categories, "repetition," "opposition," "adaptation," give no license to assign rank and importance to one of these factors to the prejudice of the other. It is sheer dogmatism to imply (as in the passage quoted above from p. 134) that invention is simply and solely a function of imitation. The presumption is decidedly against it. Imitation is evidently a factor in the social reaction, and we must assign it due value. But variation, as Tarde himself is compelled to advertise, is a constant social phenomenon. Masking it

under the term adaptation does not change the reality, nor diminish the probability that something quite as radical as imitation gets in its work when a variation is produced. What that something is need not now be asked. In trying to show that imitation is the one essential social process, Tarde has, in spite of himself, made it more evident that imitation is not the only essential social factor.

It ought to be evident by this time to every intelligent sociologist that "imitation" is but one among the unnumbered terms of the multiple working hypothesis which is marking out promising lines of social research.

In spite of M. Tarde's earnest harking back to the minute realities, his reasoning seems to be based at last on a realism that attributes efficient functioning force to abstract ideas. This appears in the closing sentence of the book: "The mutual harmonies of our three terms, repetition, opposition, adaptation, are easily intelligible when we consider progressive repetition as functioning in the service of the adaptation which it extends and develops, in favor sometimes of the opposition which it also conditions. We may also believe that all three labor together for the extension of universal variation under individual and personal forms of the highest order."

ALBION W. SMALL.

Manuel de bibliographie générale (Bibliotheca bibliographica nova).

Par HENRI STEIN. Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1898.

Pp. 20 + 895, large 8vo. (Manuels de bibliographie historique, II.)

THIS book comes of good antecedents. Its author, M. Henri Stein, is editor of *Le bibliographie moderne*, the French organ for the advancement of the science of bibliography, and of *Polybiblion*, which is doing more than any other periodical in France, or in the world, probably, to exploit the whole field of current bibliography. M. Stein was coeditor with M. C. V. Langlois of *Les archives de l'histoire de France*, published in 1891-3, which forms the first volume in the series of "Manuels de bibliographie historique," and which has been highly commended. M. Langlois, the coworker of M. Stein, published in 1896 *Manuel de bibliographie historique*, which, though a small book, is packed with valuable information well digested, arranged, and indexed as to general bibliographical works and the bibliography